

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah protect and preserve him),

Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 6)

As I have mentioned before, my respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had established a bookstore named Darul Isha'at which he had left behind in Deoband, and Bhai Jaan (respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him)) used to take care of it. However, it only generated a small revenue and on top of that there was no way to transport it to Pakistan. Our respected father had somehow had a few small booklets published even after coming to Pakistan. This was a time when Urdu speaking immigrants were coming to Pakistan battered, broke and distressed, and the biggest problem for them was their own food and shelter. Therefore, the demand for Urdu books was not enough to generate any income, after covering printing and publishing costs.

In this financial situation our respected father also had a constant concern about his elderly mother whom he had left behind in Deoband. She was bay'ah to Hazrat Gangohi¹ (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) and we had never, in our entire lives, seen her void of Zikrullah (remembrance of Allah Ta'ala). This was to such an extent that we used to hear the words "Allah Allah" with each of her breaths. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) wished to arrange for her to come to Pakistan as soon as possible. She could also not bear travel by train. Besides this, our Bhai Jaan was left alone in our house in Deoband. He was only 22 to 24 years of age, and would manage all matters related to Darul Isha'at. What were his emotions at being alone, away from parents and siblings? An idea about this can be made by a card he wrote to us when Eid had come in those days, in which he had described his feelings in a poem. I still remember the following verses of that poem:

مانا کہ میں دل درد کا خوگر ہی بنا لوں
لیکن جو خلش چھپ نہ سکے، کیسے چھپا لوں
تم عید کی خوشیوں سے کرو گھر میں چراغاں
میں اپنا ہی دل اپنے ہی داغوں سے سجا لوں
ماں باپ جدا، بھائی بہن پاس نہیں ہیں
ایسے میں بتاؤ کہ میں کیا عید منالوں

Translation:

¹ Hazrat Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi

I agree that I should make my heart accustomed to pain,
But how can I hide the uneasiness which cannot be concealed
You can light up your house due to happiness of Eid
I will decorate my heart with my own scars
Parents are away, siblings are not with me,
Tell me, how do I celebrate Eid in this situation?

A third worry for our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was that the four of us brothers who had come to Pakistan needed education, and at that time there was only one Madrasa in Karachi, which was located in Khadda locality and known as Mazharul Uloom. It was so far away from our house that it was impractical for us to study there.

The biggest inconvenience our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) faced was that the area we were living had a majority British and Parsi population, and the few Muslims who lived here sadly did not have much concern for Deen, except whom Allah Ta'ala willed; as a result there was no Masjid nearby. Initially our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) would go very far away to be able to participate in congregational prayers, but later he had had a cabin built almost in front of our house, with cooperation from some Muslims, in which five times congregational prayers started. Gradually, an area for a Masjid in the neighbouring alley was obtained, where, all praise is for Allah, a Masjid was built, and which still exists today.

An additional problem was that caravans of immigrants were reaching Karachi every day. Some of them were our relatives and had no support except from our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Thus they also lived in our house as almost permanent guests, and making effort to help them obtain a source of income was also among our respected father's (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) duties. Besides this, he also used to try to help the broke and distressed immigrants in every possible way.

In short, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was facing various types of problems and it is difficult for us today to even guess how he faced those situations. But for us he was an extremely kind father who would always seem happy and carefree in front of his family, rather he would even take us out to cheer us. The most scenic seaside attraction in Karachi in those days was Clifton which used to be mostly called "*Hawa Bandar*" (air harbour) in those days. Since it was considered far away from the city center and few buses used to go there, it often used to be desolate and tranquil during daytime. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) would take all of us family members there during that time. The sea used to reach the place where today the big park is situated, and the waves of the sea would come underneath the front portion of the old bridge which today stretches from the eastern to the western side of the park. We used to swim in the waves of the sea according to our individual capacities and would return home after eating the lunch we would bring

from home. Similarly, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) would sometimes take us for a sailboat ride from Kiamari to Manora, and this day trip used to be very exciting for us kids.

On the one hand, notwithstanding the above-mentioned problems, he would arrange for such entertainments to refresh our minds (and, by telling us stories and sayings of pious elders he would also nurture our minds during such outings), on the other hand, due to the scholarly disposition that Allah Ta'ala had bestowed upon our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), pure scholarly and (Islamic) jurisprudential activities were never stopped. Even though he had resigned from the post of head Mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband a long time ago, people used to send (Islamic) jurisprudential questions to him from all over the world, and the answers to which he would write even in those circumstances. And although he was not able to bring many things from Deoband, he however brought important books, manuscripts, handwritten writings, and letters and blessed relics of pious elders with much care. And he would say: "During customs check my biggest concern was for those books and papers, but the customs officers had no interest in them. Their concern was that no gold or silver, or unstitched cloth should be able to pass through." Thus a large portion of this scholarly property of our respected father had come with him, to such an extent that even Shaykhul Islam Hazrat 'Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was not able to bring as many books with him. As a result, if he needed to conduct research for some question of jurisprudence, he would climb the stairs up three floors to visit our house, and would study here.

Gradually these problems began solving themselves, by the Grace of Allah Ta'ala, in the form of a company, for publishing books, which our respected father's (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) friends opened in Karachi itself, in partnership with him. On the other hand, it became possible for Bhai Jaan, who was running the bookstore in Deoband alone, to somehow transport the bookstore to Pakistan, and to also bring our respected paternal grandmother (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon her) along. Since she could not bear to travel by train, he brought her from Delhi by flight. That day was of unforgettable joy for us family members, when we went to receive her at the airport at Drigh Road. The airport at Drigh Road used to be considered far away from the city, and a forest had to be crossed on the way. In those days only one airline, by the name of Orient Airways, used to fly between Pakistan and India. When its Dakota airplane stopped at the runway, it was the first time I got the opportunity to see an airplane from up close. All our eyes were focused at its door. A short while later Bhai Jaan appeared from the door and with a smile on his face he waved at us then returned inside. A few moments later when he came out, he was holding our grandmother in his arms. And thus a big worry of our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was solved.

Bhai Jaan brought as many books on the plane as he could, however the entire collection could only come by sea. Allah Ta'ala made this possible by way of a special student of our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), who hailed from district Akyab of Burma, who had come to Darul Uloom Deoband as a student. He was especially close with our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Since our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had participated in the Pakistan Movement, and he did not want to be part of any political effort while being affiliated with the Darul Uloom, he had thus resigned from Darul Uloom at the instructions of his Shaykh Hazrat Hakeem Ul Umma Thanwi (May

his secret be sanctified). Since Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab was close with our respected father he had studied some books from him, probably in his free time, and used to stay in his service and company very often. He was very grieved by our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) going to Pakistan, and himself wanted to come as well. Allah Ta'ala had given him great talent for actively doing tasks requiring adventurism, hard work and exertion. He took up the task of bringing the books by sea on himself, and made it happen. Thus the bookstore was transported to Pakistan through him. Our respected father called his nephew, late respected Fakhr 'Aalam Sahab to come with him. After the passing away of his parents he was being brought up by our respected paternal grandmother (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Due to our grandmother coming to Pakistan he had been living at his (maternal) aunt's place in Deoband. Our respected grandmother was anxious at his separation from her. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) thus found it appropriate to call him together with Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Thus they came together by ship.

The beginning of my education

Hazrat Shaykhul Islam 'Allama Shabbir Ahmad Sahab Usmani (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) did not have his own house in Karachi, however a leader of Muslim League, late S. M. Qureshi Sahab, who lived in Amil Colony located on Jamshed Road, had a bungalow in which he had requested Hazrat to stay. Thus Hazrat was staying in this house, and our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to visit him often to discuss the problems being faced by the newly created country. To receive prayers (*dua*) from Hazrat he often used to take me along. I remember that one day I was sitting in front of Hazrat with Qa'ida Baghdadi in a beautiful portfolio. Most probably our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had taken me along that time so that Hazrat could initiate my studies.

On the other side, Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had built a Masjid in Jacob Line which had its roof made with tin sheets, and adjacent to the Masjid was his house. He had also established a small Madrasa in that Masjid in which children were taught reading and memorization of the Noble Quran. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) enrolled my elder brothers in that Madrasa, whereby respected brother Muhammad Wali Razi Sahab was memorizing the Quran under Qari Muhammad Zakariyya Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Rafee' Usmani Sahab under Hafiz Nazeer Ahmad Sahab. Due to my small age, instead of enrolling me in that Madrasa our respected father put me under Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) to study the Qa'idah Baghdadi at home.

I had not finished the Qa'ida, rather a large chunk of it was left, when we learnt via a letter from Deoband that a niece of mine (who was one year older than me) had started reading the first Juz (Alif Laam Meem). I have mentioned before that Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was used to accomplishing the most difficult tasks with great speed. Thus when he came to know that my niece, who is almost the same age as me, has started the Alif Laam Meem Juz in Deoband he told me: "You have read enough of Qa'idah Baghdadi. We will start the 'Ammah Juz (30th Juz) for you." Thus I started the 'Ammah Juz before finishing the Qa'idah. Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad

Sahab continued teaching me how to read the Quran in this fashion until I had finished seven Juz (parts), whereby he said: “You have sufficiently recognized the letters now, so you can read the remaining Juz on your own every day.” Thereafter he briefly went through the Urdu Guide of “Bahishti Zewar”, and soon started “Bahishti Gohar”.

I still remember that when I started “Bahishti Gohar” the first sentence was: “Initially this world was nonexistent”. It was difficult for me to understand the meaning of “nonexistent”, and to understand its meaning I kept cross-questioning my teacher for a long time. Anyway! I had only done a few lessons from “Bahishti Gohar” when Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) started the teaching of other books¹ in his Madrasa as well. In time, full time classes for teaching and learning started where such senior scholars as Hazrat Maulana Badr ‘Aalam Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) also taught, and perhaps for some time my respected father (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) as well. Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) got busy in teaching at this Madrasa so I had to study some chapters of “Bahishti Gohar” and “Seerat-e-Khaatamul Anbiya” from my respected mother (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon her), but I don’t remember how many chapters I read from whom. These were my complete universe for learning Urdu language. I did not study any other book besides these two for learning Urdu language.

On the other side I continued reading the Noble Quran daily on my own. I would sit on a *charpai* and place the Noble Quran on a pillow, and would read some part of it every day. Some days I would read to my respected mother or some other family member. This continued until one morning, all praise is for Allah Ta’ala, I completed the reading of the Noble Quran.

I would notice that whenever a child completed the reading or memorization of the Noble Quran, usually a special day for celebrating this achievement would be organized which would be called the celebration of “Aameen”. Sometimes sweets would also be distributed on such a day. However I completed the reading of the Noble Quran such that the day I finished my “self”-study nobody even knew that I was completing the reading of the Noble Quran that day. I still remember the sorrow of the day when I read the last verse from the Quran, alone in the room, and closed it; nobody to see me, nobody to listen to it; no celebration; no gathering.

At long last, I told my respected father (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) that I have complete the reading of the Noble Quran today. He was very happy and, to give me a gift, he sent two of my elder brothers (Maulana Wali Raazi and Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Rafee’ Uthmani (may their shade be extended)) to the bazaar. I kept waiting impatiently for their return in the balcony of our house. Finally, when I could see them in the distance, I saw them with a blue toy car in their hands with which they were themselves playing on their way home. My happiness knew no bounds at getting this toy car. It was a simple but beautiful car (perhaps automatic toy cars were not available in those times), but for me it was a great treasure of the universe. Today it feels that the things with which one forms a deep attachment of the heart in one stage of one’s mortal life, one laughs at this attachment at a later stage

¹ i.e. in addition to the reading and memorization of the Quran

of life. Finally a time will come when the entire world, all the properties and treasure-troves of wealth will become more meaningless than toys.

بد نامی حیات دوروزی نه بود بیش
آں هم بتو کلیم چه گویم چساں گذشت
یک روز وقف بستن دل شود به این و آن
روز دگر به کنند دل زین و آن گذشت

Translation:

The infamy of this life is no more than two days
Even those, O Kaleem! What can I say, how they passed by?
One day passed in attaching the heart to worldly pleasures
The other one passed in trying to detach the heart from worldly pleasures

Anyway! This is how my education started.